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THE COST OF LIVING.

When America's greatest railroad builder some time ago uttered the aphorism, "It is not the high cost of living, but the cost of high living that is the trouble," he put the situation in a nutshell. As compared with a quarter of a century or more ago, the cost of many of the necessaries of life has been materially reduced; but the people of this country are spending more and wasting more than formerly. This is true of all parts of the country and of all walks in life.

Such necessaries as kerosene, sugar, coffee, tea, flour and shoes are not only cheaper, but much better in quality than those our fathers had. Meat and butter are somewhat dearer, but what is sold today is worth the difference. In those good old days, for instance, it was practically impossible to get any butter in the winter except such as had been packed in crocks or firkins in the preceding summer, and which was always so salty and strong that it went a long ways on the table and was therefore economical. Such a thing as the creamery butter of today was unknown. It is worth the difference. So is the meat that is sold and served today. The beef of former years was made up mostly of worn-out milch cows and the long-horned range cattle which have been improved off the face of the earth since we began to demand something better. Then again we do not have to eat the flesh of animals killed perhaps the same day. The packing houses chill and store it for three or four weeks until it is in proper condition as regards flavor and tenderness. This is worth paying for.

Take the case of fruits and vegetables. Half a century ago people who did not cultivate their own gardens did without nearly everything in that line except potatoes, cabbage and apples, and such apples could not be given away today. Now even the poor of our large cities are large consumers of bananas, pineapples, oranges and other tropical fruits, in addition to the products of the temperate zone. Tropical fruits were seen only on the tables of the rich in those days, just as hothouse grapes are today; and a poor man would have been looked upon as just as wasteful then if he bought a pineapple, as he would be today if he paid a dollar or more a pound for grapes grown under glass.

Our people, as a whole, produce more, earn more and consume more than formerly; and this is not a bad state of affairs. In this land we have attained the highest plane of living for the masses that the world has ever known. This is true in a degree of the most recent arrivals on our shores from whom the ranks of the cheapest and roughest labor are recruited. The first thing the immigrant from southern or eastern Europe learns today when he sets foot on land here is to eat meat every day. He begins at once to live on a higher plane, and the stimulus of stronger and more nourishing food makes him a more efficient workman.

On the continent of Europe, and even in England, it always seems to be a mystery to the manufacturers how it is that American factories produce so much more in proportion to the number of hands employed than they can, even in cases when the American manufacturer depends almost wholly on foreign-born labor. The explanation lies in the improvement that better food makes in the foreign workman. It is not only in food but in raiment and other things that the new arrivels change their ways; and the rapid Americanization of the children is a constant marvel.

Now many of them will tell how much cheaper it is to live where they were born, but few of them would go back and eat and live as they did before they tasted meat every day in America. They are paying the price of advancement in the scale of civilization, but that is worth all it costs. Look at the children in the streets of our great cities. Even on the East Side of New York one rarely sees a barefotted child, even in summer. Thirty or forty years ago most of the children of the poor in both city and country went without shoes all summer, and some of them most of the winter. Going barefoot in summer was probably not a terrible hardship, but the passing of the sight of barefooted children marks a change in the whole scale of living of the masses of the people.

Among people, says the New York Commercial, who have the means to live comfortably many complaints regarding the high cost of living are heard; but the cost of extravagant display is not estimated separately. A woman will invite her friends to lunch at a Fifth Avenue hotel and then grumble at the charges. She might have gone to a modest place a block away where good food is sold at moderate prices, but she would not be seen going into a cheap place, let alone ask her friends there. She forgets that the high-priced hotel stands on land worth hundreds of dollars a square foot and that from five to ten dollars a day has to be charged for ground rent against every table in the main dining room. It all goes in the bill, and adds to the "cost of high living." It is the people themselves who are forcing up the cost of luxury all the time.

House rent is higher than formerly in most prosperous communities, but that is largely due to the mad desire of a number of people to live in one particular spot that they think is more fashionable or more desirable than others nearby. Much misery is also caused by the gregariousness of foreigners who insist on living together in city slums instead of going out into the country. But, in the main, high rents are a part of the cost of raising the scale of living. Stationary bathtubs were scarce articles fifty years ago, but the making of them is one of America's most important industries today. They are still almost as scarce in Europe as they were here before steamers crossed the Atlantic—but we keep on hearing how much cheaper living is in Europe. Everyone uses ice in America—a thing almost unknown abroad. It is a little thing, but it means that the masses of the people here are using as an every-day necessity what is regarded as a luxury symbolic of wealth in other parts of the world. We are not paying more as a whole, but we are buying more than formerly; and we reap the benefit as long as we buy wisely.

PEAT POWDER TO SUPPLANT COAL?

In regions where peat bogs beautify the landscape and coal is expensive recent Swedish experiments with peat powder fuel may prove of interest. These experiments, following upon the commercial failure of peat briquets on Swedish railroads, were conducted with a view toward utilizing peat in pulverized form in stationary boilers for steam generation, and also for electric ore smelting. In these fields, the prospects for success are more promising.

In experiments at the Sahlstrom factory in Jonkoping, several thousand tons of peat powder fuel have been used in comparison with good English coal. It was found early in the tests that the balance between greater efficiency and the higher cost of thorough drying could be best settled by leaving 15 per cent of moisture in the peat powder. High-grade peat with this amount of moisture was found equal in fuel value to the best English coal. Second quality peat with 15 per cent moisture, has a lower fuel value, but is fortunately quite serviceable; its fuel ratio as compared with the best English coal, is, according to Dr. Ekeland, the Swedish peat expert, 10 to 12.

Peat powder is used in Sweden at a cost of $1.75 per ton, including interest and sinking-fund charges. It could be produced at not much more than this figure in the peat bogs of our northern states and Atlantic seaboard. In Sweden, its advantages over good English coal costing $4.10 to $4.90, are fully recognized. In competition in this country with hydro-electric power, producer-gas, and long-distance electric transmission from central power stations, the advantages of peat powder loom less conspicuously.—Mining and Engineering World.

ESTIMATION OF AVAILABLE ORE.

The estimation of the amount and value of "ore in sight," is often so carelessly more or rather guessed at by people who either do not know how or do not wish to arrive at the truth of the matter, that the idea is quite widespread that "ore in sight" is at best an imaginary term. It is, of course, an approximation, the degree of accuracy of which depends in a large measure on the nature of the ore body and the method of estimation employed—also, as pointed out, on the man who makes the estimate.

Since the mining of low-grade porphyry copper ores has become an important factor in our copper production, it is important to be able to determine with a fairly high degree of accuracy, before embarking on the development of a porphyry property, the amount and value of the ore available.

In this connection the article of Robert E. McConnell, on "Ore Tonnage from Drill Hole Records, appearing elsewhere in this issue, is of considerable interest. The method described is that used by a large porphyry copper property in the southwest.

NEW INDUSTRY FOR NEVADA.

A new industry which is being tested in Belgium should receive the attention of wool-growers in Utah, says the Ogden Standard. This applies to Nevada where sheep raising is such a prominent industry.

The guanaco is being imported from the west coast of South America and bred for its wool. The animals when raised in Belgium are commanding as high as $73 each.

The animals are hardy and are said to produce a fine, soft wool four to six inches long. By careful methods a herd of guanacos can be made more profitable to the farmer than a flock of sheep. As they are indigenous to Argentina, Chile and Peru, it is not improbable that thousands of guanacos that roam in a wild state in flocks on the South American pampas and which are easily tamed may be captured and cared for as sheep, as their wool is three times as valuable as that of the latter, and it may become an important export from the west coast of South America.

Oroville insists that Ishi, the uncontaminated aborigine, be named after that town. This is a flattering tribute to the capability of Ishi for getting advertisement, but it would be unfair to name the Indian after Oroville until he is educated sufficiently to realize the responsibilities that would go with such a name.

A boa constrictor is reported to have died of a pain in his interior. It must have been a large-sized pain to have extended for the full length of the boas alimentary canal. The pain was nearly three times the length of a giraffe's sore throat.